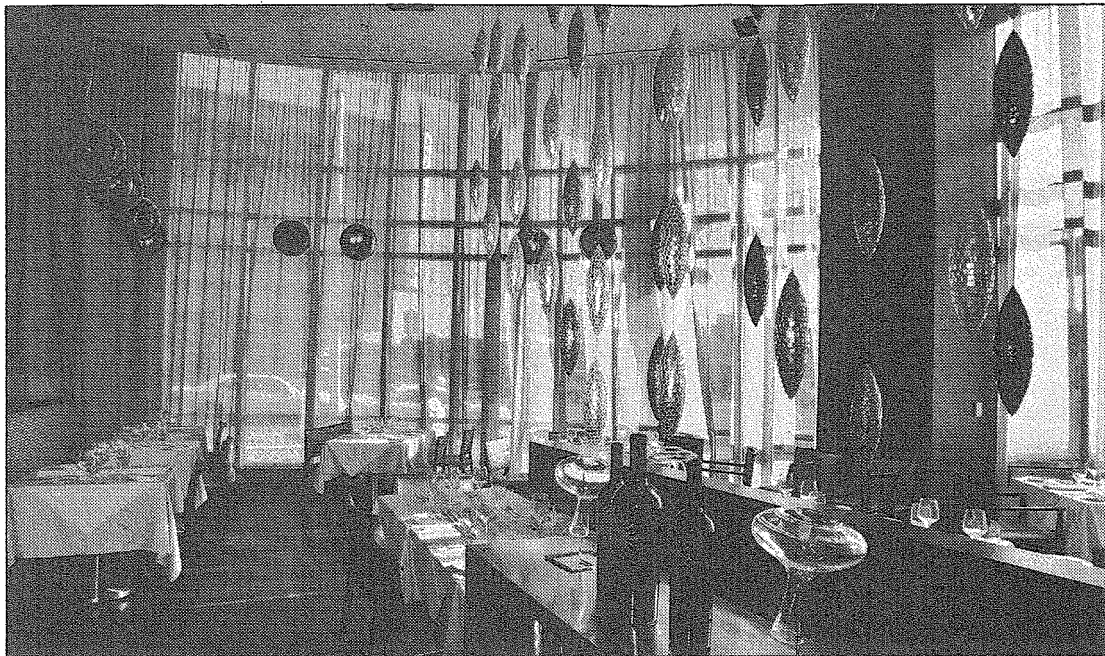


WHAT'S NEW



LIZ HAFALIA / The Chronicle

OPENING: Luce debuts in S.F.'s InterContinental Hotel

Its location in the new InterContinental Hotel should ensure a steady stream of vacationers and conventioners from Moscone Center West next door. But Luce, which opened on Thursday, aims for a local clientele as well, with a refined California-Italian menu, a healthy Sonoma and Napa representation on the wine list and a sophisticated design.

The cuisine: Chef Dominique Crenn has designed a seafood-heavy Italian menu incorporating California flavors and modern techniques. The Ocean and Land tartare starter includes layers of mussels, sturgeon and beef, served

with spicy olive ice cream. House-made squid ink trofie carbonara incorporates baby calamari, pancetta chunks and a poached egg. Main courses include pork belly cooked sous vide, paired with spot prawns, lentils and pickled fruit.

The team: Michael Mondavi, Robert Mondavi's son and head of Folio Fine Wine Partners, had a part in planning the 130-seat restaurant's concept and wine list. Chef Crenn most recently was at Abode in Los Angeles and previously worked in San Francisco at Stars, Campton Place and several other spots. The sommelier is Helen Roy, and hospitality design

firm Brayton Hughes is responsible for the decor.

The vibe: The stone floors incorporate gold and black mosaics, and metallic-hued seat cushions, banquettes and curtains tie into the color scheme, with purple bubble lamps and glittery pendant hangings adding a contemporary edge.

Luce (InterContinental Hotel), 888 Howard St. (at Fifth Street), San Francisco; (415) 616-6566. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Credit cards and reservations accepted. Starters, \$9-\$22; entrees, \$28-\$31; desserts, \$8-\$16.

—Tara Duggan